

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SCA-01 JUSE-00 SSO-00 DRC-01

RSC-01 /023 W

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O 211555Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6543

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 1098

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, CS

SUBJECT: EXTRADITION BILL PASSES ASSEMBLY

1. THE CONTROVERSIAL EXTRADITION BILL, WIDELY REGARDED AS PRO-VESCO IN CHARACTER, PASSED THE ASSEMBLY MARCH 20 IN A VOTE FOLLOWING A BRIEF THIRD DEBATE. THE PLN FRACTION IN THE ASSEMBLY, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, VOTED SOLIDLY FOR THE BILL AND HAD THE HELP OF THREE OPPOSITION VOTES. HOWEVER, SEVERAL OPPOSITION DEPUTIES WHO HAD VOTED FAVORABLY ON

THE BILL IN EARLIER DEBATES REVERSED THEIR EARLIER POSITION AND VOTED NEGATIVELY ON THE FINAL MOTION.

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS THE ASSEMBLY DEBATE WAS EMOTIONAL, WITH SEVERAL DEPUTIES OPPOSED TO THE BILL EXPRESSING THEIR ANGER OVER CRITS APPROVAL TO THE PRESS. TERESA

EAVALETA, THE ONLY PLN DEPUTY OPPOSING THE BILL, REPORTEDLY TOLD REPORTERS THAT, "ONE THING IS LOYALTY AND SINCERITY, AND QUITE ANOTHER IS UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT," FOR THE CRITERIA OF A LARGE GROUP OF FELLOW PARTY DEPUTIES. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT DEPUTY, JESUS FERNANDEZ, WHO HAD SUPPORTED THE MEASURE IN EARLIER DEBATES ARGUING THAT THE BILL WAS UNIMPORTANT SINCE THE CONSTITUTION ITSELF REGARDS INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DOMESTIC LAW, REVERSED HIS POSITION ON MARCH 20, ARGUING THAT AS SUCH CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS

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REGARDING INTERNATIONAL TREATIES PREVAIL THERE IS NO POINT IN

PASSING SUCH A LAW UNLESS THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW PRESAGES A
DENUNCIATION OF THE EXISTING EXTRADITION TREATY WITH THE U.S.

3. ONLY JULIO SUNOL'S DIARIO DE COSTA RICA HAS YET REACTED
EDITORIALLY TO THE PASSED BILL. HOWEVER, SUNOL'S EDITORIAL
COVERS THE FRONT PAGE OF HIS PAPER THIS MORNING AND IS
VICIOUS IN ITS ATTACK ON PRESIDENT FIGUERES. UNDER THE
HEADLINE, "ONE CANNOT SERVE BOTH THE REPUBLIC AND
ROBERT VESCO," SUNOL PROCEEDS TO CATALOG SOME OF THE EARLIER-
KNOWN RELATIONS BETWEEN VESCO AND FIGUERES WHICH PRECEDED
A QEMBLY APPROVAL OF THE EXTRADITION BILL. SUNOL
DECRIES THIS NEW HUMILIATION OF THE COUNTRY AND ITS TRADITIONS.
SUNOL ACCUSES FIGUERES OF BEHAVING LIKE AN EMPEROR AND
SUGGESTS THAT THE SOCIAL DISCONTENT BEING NURTURED BY SUCH
BEHAVIOR IS DANGEROUS. FINALLY, SUNOL CHARGES PRESIDENT-ELECT
ODUBER, BECAUSE OF HIS COMPLETE SILENCE ON THE SUBJECT, WITH
DISLOYALTY TO THE CONSTITUTION AND WITH DISRESPECT OF JUSTICE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXTRADITION, LAW, PRESS COMMENTS, CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SANJO01098
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740060-0165
From: SAN JOSE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740325/aaaaaxtw.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION L
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 SEP 2002 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <03 JAN 2003 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXTRADITION BILL PASSES ASSEMBLY
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, CS, US, (VESCO, ROBERT), (FERNANDEZ, JESUS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005